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BULLETIN OF THE CITY ART MUSEUM OF ST. LOUIS

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SARGENT

MRS. VALLE AUSTEN

Lent by Mrs. Valle Austen

Bulletin of the City Art Museum of St. Louis



INNESS

THE SETTING SUN

Lent by Mrs. Breckinridge Long

WORKS OF ART LOANED TO THE MUSEUM

WE reproduce on the cover of our Bulletin Mr. Sargent's portrait of Mrs. Valle Austen, generously lent to the Museum by the owner, Mrs. Valle Austen. The Museum is very fortunate to have an important example of the work of Mr. Sargent on exhibition. It is signed and dated, Paris, 1882, and was executed when the distinguished painter was at the height of his power, the very year in fact in which El Jaleo, now in Mrs. Gardner's collection in Boston, was produced by him. Nor does it fall short of that virile canvas. It shows Mr. Sargent's virtuosity in all its intensity, but subordinated to the theme.

The figure, exquisite in white satin, stands before a grey wall, a black scarf falling from the neck over a bouquet of red roses. It is

a sympathetic portrait in which Mr. Sargent has presented to us a subtle and rare beauty, poise, reserve. The satin is reminiscent of Terborch. The hands are perhaps the most remarkable part of the painting, sensitive, delicate, quietly folded together.

Not yet thirty years old, Mr. Sargent produced his most famous canvases before he left France in 1883. Concerning this period, Mr. Christian Brinton has written:

"On leaving Carolus-Duran he took a studio in the rue Notre-Dame-des Champs, later moving over to the more spacious boulevard Berthier. It was only necessary for him to paint a dozen or so portraits in order to obtain international recognition. The eloquent Carolus was succeeded by an effective presentation of Dr. Pozzi which still looks from the walls of the distin-

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SARGENT

OLIVE TREES AT CORFU

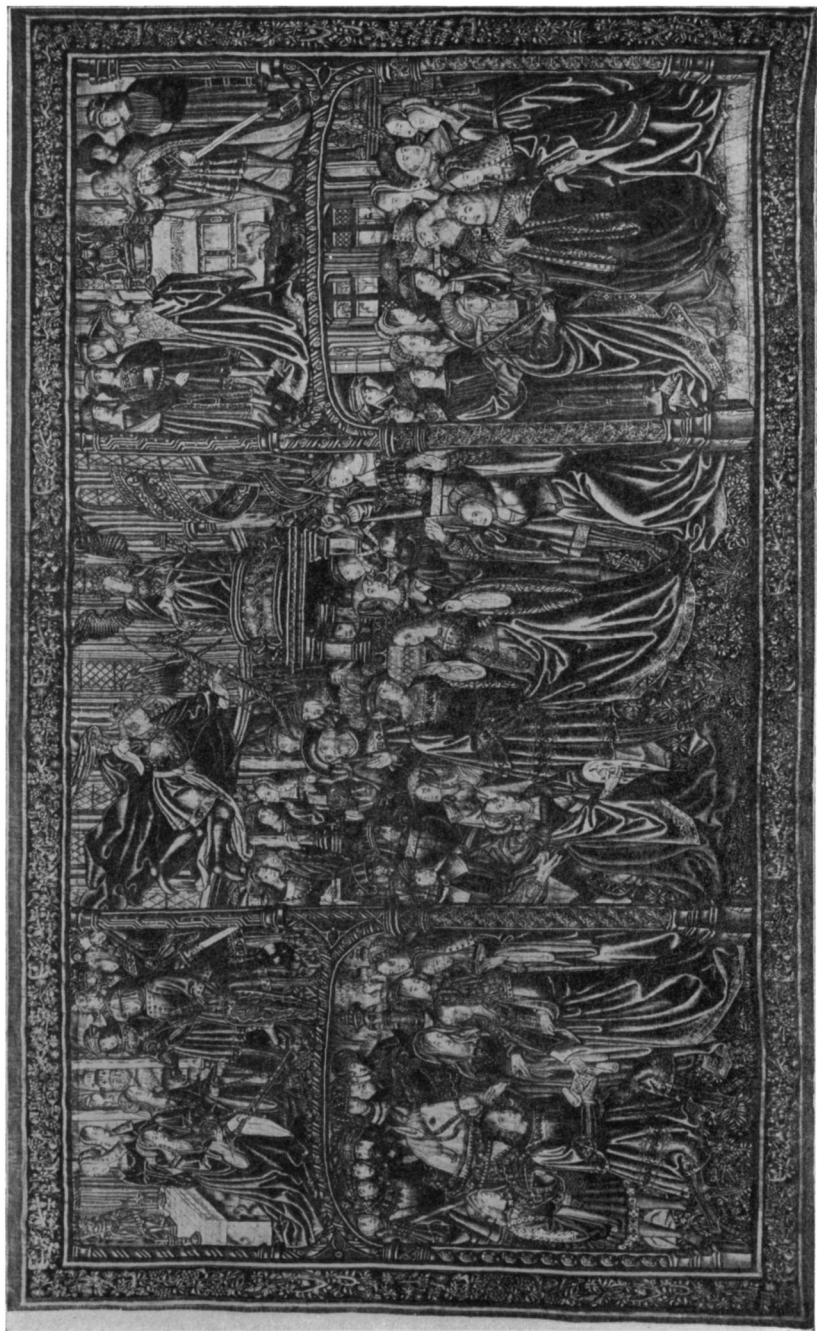
Lent by Mrs. Breckinridge Long

guished specialist's hotel in the Avenue d'Iena. The Portrait of a Lady, Mme. Pailleron, and a standing, full-length silhouette of Mme. Gautreau, as sensitive as it was decisive, soon followed. Conceived in the vein of a modern Primitive, this last-named canvas proved a veritable storm-centre. It is Piero della Francesca, not, as has been pronounced, Botticelli whom this much discussed likeness recalls. Violently denounced and quite as vehemently praised, it added substantially to the painter's fame, and proved, to a certain extent, the turning-point of his career. From Mme. Gautreau onward he leaves behind the stamp of previous effort. The delicate mellowness of the Portrait of a Young Lady, and above all the soft liquid beauty of the little-known likeness of Mrs. Austen dressed

in cream-white satin with a black bow at the neck and a bouquet of red roses at her breast, are seldom seen again."

The Museum is deeply indebted to Mrs. Breckinridge Long, who has lent a collection of Chinese snuff bottles; fifteen Chinese paintings; a water-color drawing, entitled Geese, by Millet; Givernay, a landscape, by Monet; The Setting Sun, by Inness; Olive Trees at Corfu, by Sargent, and other works of art.

We reproduce her important picture by Inness, called The Setting Sun, which the artist painted in 1889, five years before his death. Inness was a self-taught painter, who mastered his craft and set his goal before he went to France to study. There he came under the compelling influence of Rousseau and of Daubigny,



FLEMISH TAPESTRY; EARLY XVI CENTURY. (13 FT. 7 IN. x 22 FT. 9 IN.)

THE KNIGHT'S REPENTANCE



DETAIL OF THE TAPESTRY REPRODUCED ON THE OPPOSITE PAGE

Lent by Messrs. French and Company

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and enlarged his capacity without undermining his originality. The distinction of his late manner, for which he is chiefly famous, is due to an extraordinary skill for subordinating details to breadth, as may be seen in Mrs. Long's picture. It expresses with power the painter's mood. Descriptive interests are of lesser significance; they include a farm house, a hay stack, a pool of water reflecting the sunlight, the figure of a man.

We reproduce also a second landscape from Mrs. Long's collection. Not only for the virtuosity this displays but as well for its descriptive interest, the painting, *Olive Trees at Corfu*, offers the public an opportunity to study the late manner of Mr. Sargent in a representative example.

In Gallery XVII have been placed on opposite walls a late-Gothic tapestry and a late-Gothic painting, both showing transitional character from Gothic to Renaissance. Works of art mix best with their kind; it is only by grouping them according to nationality and period that their full character can be realized.

In this connection the late-Gothic tapestry loaned to the Museum by Messrs. French & Company of New York serves a doubly useful purpose.

Good examples of Gothic art are so scarce in America that one is apt to forget that, to have the best before one, in stained glass and European tapestry, as well as in cathedrals, one must seek Gothic examples.

One has to keep in mind that whereas in Italy it was the custom to leave large wall spaces for mural decoration, in the north this was not the case; brilliant stained glass windows, tapestries and easel pictures took the place of mural decorations. Tapestry thus came to play an important part in the home of the wealthy, in the castle of the nobleman, in the church.

The tapestry that has been loaned to the Museum has for its subject *A Knight's Repentance*, which is described in five scenes.

The first depicts a knight to whom two ladies before an altar are presenting a sword and a necklace. The second represents the young man offering a letter to a lady. She is accompanied by four other ladies, he by seven men and a page, the latter bearing his helmet. In the same group is his charger.

The larger scene in the middle of the tapestry shows Venus enthroned, Cupid flying blindfolded, above a Court of Love. The knight, now married to his lady, is accused by a former love of having deserted her. She wrings her hands in despair; her father and her mother protest. Knights, courtiers and other spectators to a total of twenty-four join in the demonstration.

The fourth scene depicts the knight confessing his guilt before a bishop; the fifth, his repentance, Justice giving him a cup of Repentance, which he drains.

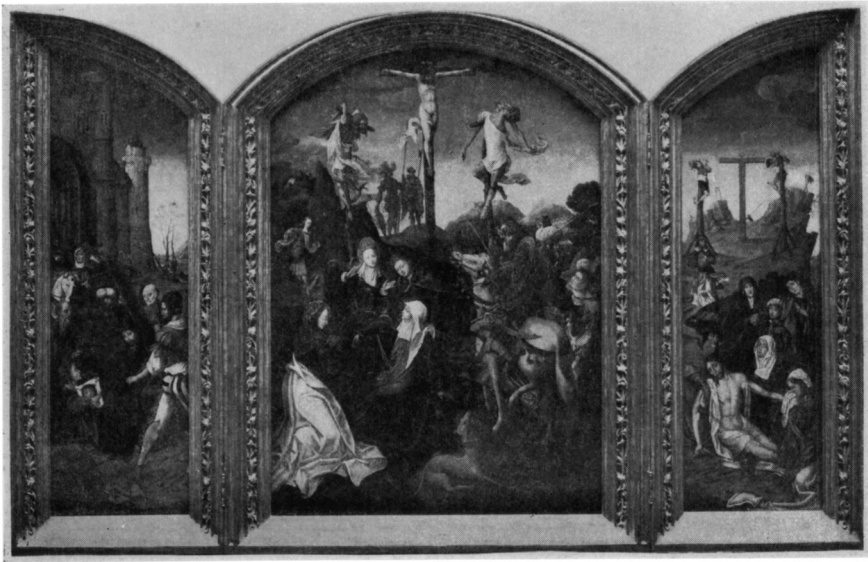
About the five scenes is a narrow border of fruits and flowers. Gothic tapestries had narrow borders, Renaissance pieces usually very wide ones.

One of the interesting things about it is the simplicity with which splendid masses of color are produced. A Gothic weaver would content himself with twenty tones of color, whereas in our times the Gobelin looms alone employed in the second half of the nineteenth century as many as 14,400. The older tapestries are the more famous for their coloring. The explanation rests partly in the skill exercised by the mediaeval artisan in hatching, namely, in interlacing woolen threads of two colors in his design. One may see in a Gothic tapestry not only a severe beauty characteristic of most



TRIPTYCH

CLOSED



ERASMUS

TRIPTYCH (1501)

Lent by Mr. Edward A. Faust

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arts at their golden period, but a use of colors anticipatory of the modern method we term impressionism, produced in painting by breaking a tone into its component elements and setting these side by side,—a process not altogether different from hatching in mixed colors of wool. The dyes used in the present example, which is woven on fourteen warp threads to the inch, are in a good state of preservation.

The hanging is very little larger than an example of the same period which was lent to the Museum last year by Mr. Edward A. Faust, entitled *The Prophecy of Nathan*. The two pieces have some points in common, such as strength, depth and grace of folds in the treatment of drapery.

Our example was formerly in the collection of Lord Sackville, Knole House, Seven Oaks, England, but was purchased by the present owner from the heirs of Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan with the rest of his tapestry collection, of which the piece in our Museum is considered one of the more important.

The Museum also has on view, loaned by Mr. Edward A. Faust, a late-Gothic triptych (4 ft. 4 in. x 6 ft. 11 in.), of the old Netherlands school of painting in an excellent state of preservation. It was painted in the year 1501 by Erasmus.

The central panel represents *The Crucifixion*. At the foot of the Cross are the three Marys; St. John supports the swooning figure of the Virgin; Mary Magdalen kneels before her. The signature of the artist is to be found on a shield borne by a horseman in Oriental costume: *Erasmus P.* 1501.

The left panel shows Christ bearing the Cross; beside Him St. Veronica on her knees, displaying the handkerchief on which has been impressed the image of the Savior. Persecutors

torment Him, one striking Him with a club. From far in the distance the three Marys and St. John look on.

The right panel depicts *The Descent from the Cross*. The two robbers remain hanging; the body of Christ has been taken down and is supported by the Virgin and Joseph of Arimathea. Mary Magdalen, resplendent in black and gold brocade, is on her knees, weeping; while the third Mary stands, with folded hands. St. John looks compassionately on, and Nicodemus, with a jar of ointment, approaches from the rear.

The most striking qualities of the triptych are the composition and the beautifully preserved colors. It is an impressive picture if the workmanship is not of the best.

The art of the Netherlands was still in a state of transition from Gothic to Renaissance standards at the time when this triptych was produced, as may be seen in the introduction of Renaissance architecture over two saints, St. Piat and St. Vincent, portrayed on the outside of the shutters. The Gothic manner prevails, however, throughout the triptych. Gothic are the attenuated figures, the vertical composition, the angular folds of drapery, the spiritual expression, the realism, the story-telling; Gothic the delight in minute and precise details; Gothic the ignorance of certain principles of perspective, and colors set side by side like panes of old stained glass.

THE FALL EXHIBITION

THE Twelfth Annual Exhibition of American Paintings will open at the City Art Museum on September 23d. More than usual interest attaches to the exhibition this year because of the important innovation in the manner of forming the collection, this being the first occasion that